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The clinician's tasks during a patient visit

Get the visit off to a good start
Learn what the patient hopes to accomplish in the visit (the patient's agenda)
Elicit the patient's complaints (symptoms), concerns, and requests
Perform an appropriately focused physical examination
Mentally test diagnostic hypotheses throughout the collection of historical and examination data
Develop a differential diagnosis of the problem(s)
Plan a cost-effective workup if needed
Choose a therapeutic intervention if needed
Discuss all of this with the patient in terms that are easily understood
Check the patient's understanding
Negotiate differences of opinion the patient and doctor may have about the nature of the problem, its evaluation, and its treatment
Assure that attention is given to disease prevention strategies appropriate to the patient's age, gender, habits, and genetic and socioeconomic risk factors
Make plans for follow-up of the problem and its treatment
Conclude the visit

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